

## ICE FISHING REPORT NUMBER 2 1/28/2009



**SAFETY REMINDER:** DEP reminds winter anglers that **SAFETY COMES FIRST!** Be aware that ice thickness varies on all water bodies due to a number of environmental factors including in-lake water circulatory patterns, snow cover and the type and amounts of recent precipitation. Please check the ice carefully before venturing out and check repeatedly to make sure that ice thickness is sufficient. Always let someone know where you are going and when you'll return.

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### ICE FISHING REPORT

*Ice fishing is in full-swing at most areas throughout Connecticut. The winter fishing tradition continues, with friends meeting on the ice to fish, socialize and compare catches!*

**TROUT** - For trout fishing try the following locations: Candlewood Lake (20" brown among the catches), Hogback Reservoir (West Branch), Colebrook Reservoir, West Hill Pond, Mohawk Pond, Squantz Pond, Black Pond (Woodstock, catches include a 6.5 lb rainbow and a 5.5 lb brown), Mashapaug Lake, Crystal Lake, East Twin Lake and Highland Lake.

**NORTHERN PIKE** - Fishing for these monsters has been excellent with many fish being caught. Best reports are from Mansfield Hollow Reservoir, Bantam Lake (many catches up to 15 lbs), Pachaug Pond (31" pike), and in coves along the Connecticut River (fish up to 40" reported).

**ATLANTIC SALMON** – Catches are being reported from Mashapaug Lake (6 lb salmon) and Crystal Lake (including a 38", 9.5 lb beauty)

**WALLEYE** – Walleye continue to increase in popularity and are producing excellent fishing opportunities at Mashapaug Lake (fish up to 28"). Anglers are also finding some walleyes downstream in Bigelow Pond (a 24-incher reported).

**PANFISH** - Panfish are being caught in good numbers, with diligent early risers having especially good success between the hours of 6:00 am and 9:00 am. Jigging with corn/grubs on your favorite lure and moving from place to place is the way to go for these delicious fish. Locations to try include West Thompson Reservoir, Hogback Reservoir, Quaddick Reservoir, Messerschmidt Pond, West Hill Pond, Black Pond (Middlefield), Candlewood Lake (40 yellow perch), Coventry Lake and Silver Lake (Berlin/Meriden).

**CHAIN PICKEREL** – Pickerel are a traditional favorite of ice fishermen. Excellent pickerel fishing is reported at Quaddick Reservoir, Highland Lake, Tyler Lake, Black Pond (Woodstock), West Hill Pond and Bigelow Pond.

**SMALLMOUTH/LARGEMOUTH BASS** - Bass are being found at Quaddick Reservoir, Black Pond (Woodstock), Bigelow Pond, Crystal Lake, Silver Lake (Berlin/Meriden), Highland Lake and Candlewood Lake (40 smallmouth bass in 25-31 feet of water; many 3-4 lb fish).

### **SPECIAL NOTE:**

Due to an unfortunate error, the "Connecticut Freshwater Record Fish" section on page 15 of the print version of both the 2008 and 2009 CT Angler's Guides has been inaccurate. The entry for the "Brown Trout (sea-run)" is incorrect. **A new record sea run brown trout was caught in 2006 by Ron Merly. His catch weighed in at 10 lbs, 8 oz., more than a half pound heavier than the previous record.** Ron made his catch on the Saugatuck River in Westport on December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Our apologies for any confusion and/or frustration this may have caused (especially to Mr. Merly). The electronic version of the Angler's Guide (pdf file) found on the DEP web site is correct.



## **NOTICES**

- DEP's annual Family Ice Fishing Derby is scheduled for Saturday, January, 31<sup>st</sup>, 8 am to 11 am at Patriot's Park on Coventry Lake (Lake Wangumbaug), Lake Street, Coventry.
- DEP has recently received a number of questions concerning the use of gaffs to help bring fish in through the ice. Currently, there is no specific prohibition on the use of a gaff in the freshwater regulations (except for striped bass). However, note that **a gaff cannot be used to actually capture the fish** as fish must be taken by the legal methods as listed for that species in the Angler's Guide (also note that spearing is prohibited for most species). Also, any fish that is not "legal" (due to length or quantity restrictions) must be "...without avoidable injury, immediately returned to the water from which taken." So **using a gaff on a fish that can't be legally kept (examples include a 30 inch pike at Bantam in January, or a large trout when you are already in possession of your limit for trout) would be considered as inflicting avoidable harm on the fish, and would be a violation.** Considering the above, it would generally be best to avoid use of gaffs.

